

## Gotham and The Prophets.

Dire Calamities Predicted For the Metropolis—Interest in the Great Hudson-Fulton Fete—The North Pole Controversy, Loeb and the Tourists—Hughes Still After Race Track Gamblers.

By JAMES A. EDGERTON.  
[Our New York Correspondent.]

EVERY now and then some one predicts that New York is to have a dire calamity befall her. Either she is to be shaken down by an earthquake or blown up by an internal upheaval or drowned by a tidal wave or have something else disagreeable happen. Whenever the prophets run short of any other calamity material they hand one to New York. When I first came to the town, six years ago, a mining engineer from out west poured a tale into my ears that would have curdled the blood of a sweet girl graduate. According to his story, the geological deposit under the city was not just exactly what a well regulated, respectable geological deposit should be. It was full of water, or something, and was liable to squash out at almost any minute. If anything happened he instructed me what to do—take for the nearest elevated railroad, get under it and run north. Pay no attention to anybody, never mind falling buildings or wig-



HENRY HUDSON AND THE HALF MOON.

gling streets, but run north. Keep running—never stop until I jumped off into the Harlem river. Then swim across and run some more. Well, it was all nuts for me, and I took it with a straight face.

Next some astrologer over in Paris handed out a lot of woe talk in the same vein, and one of our papers here featured it in two Sunday pages with disquieting looking pictures. Since that time every little prophet has been hitting it up on the same line whenever he or she could get space rates. And now the magazines are at it in their fiction departments, which is a very proper place for it. I read a story only last month about how the city was going to break in two along this fault that the mining engineer had told me about. That was about the third tale of the kind I had read in the last few years. I suppose it is as good a subject to write stories about as the eternal triangle or the impossible detective. As for the prophets, let them rave. New York does not mind, and if they can get any money or notoriety in that way I suppose there is no jail sentence for it. But I wonder if anybody seriously believes the stuff. I have a suspicion that the mining engineer did, for he hiked out of the town soon after and has never come back. Perhaps he is still going north.

The month of the Hudson-Fulton celebration is here, and New York's summer people are flocking back to town. It will be a great event, and society will take almost as much interest in it as in a horse show or dog show. In a few years we may have a monkey show, as the marmoset is now crowding the pug as a lap pet. Some of us would welcome a good, old fashioned baby show, but that is ruled out by the divorce industry. Outside of society, the Hudson-Fulton ceremonial will be the biggest thing in New York's recent history. One of the special features will be the lighting. There will be a flock of searchlights that would bore holes through a London

usually like day during the night of this celebration and in spots will be brighter than most days. The brilliant system of lighting will extend to the streets. There is no longer any need of fussing with mirrors to make our neighbors in Mars see a light patch on the earth. If they do not see Manhattan Island during the Hudson-Fulton celebration there is no need for the astronomers to try anything else in the Illumination line.

One rather amusing episode is growing out of the rivalry of England and Germany in their naval representation at the celebration. It seems we are to have an echo of the war scare across the water right here in New York. First the Kaiser sent his highest admiral to command the four war vessels that are to come from Germany, and it was confidently expected that he would be the ranking naval visitor. No sooner had the English heard of this than they sent their chief admiral also, and it is now said that he will outrank the German. Anyway, he will be saluted by nineteen guns, the highest number next to royalty. All of this must be pleasant news to the Kaiser, and his next move is awaited with interest. Whatever the outcome of the British-German entanglement may be across the water, it seems that we are to have a war between the two nations for naval honors on this side.

Hudson's feat recalls the latest little job of discovering and the row it has raised. The north pole has been found by a New Yorker just as the chief prize at the Rheims aviation contest was taken by another New Yorker. Considering the large number of ambitious gentlemen who have been looking for that same pole, it is not to be wondered at that there is some growling. I wonder if these explorers expected Dr. Cook to bring back the pole with him as evidence or to pick off a large chunk of ice from the exact spot to carry home and label as "Exhibit A." Outside of the explorers, however, the rest of us who have no professional jealousy in the matter and who do not care a hang who finds the pole so long as it is found are quite willing to say that Cook is the man and to yell our heads off in his honor. So far as we are concerned, it is a closed incident. The north pole has been captured out of the unknown, and whether done by Cook or Peary, the man who did it lives in the city of New York, U. S. A. That little point being settled, we will now turn our attention to learning how to fly without bruising our wings on the atmosphere or breaking our necks in a collision with the hard, unsympathetic earth.

It appears that in the matter of betting on the horses Governor Hughes is still on the job. Having seen the race track bill through, he now proposes to see that it is obeyed. Hearing that there was a little looking being done on the side down at Sheepshead Bay, the governor wired to the proper authorities to look into the matter. It does seem that there ought not to be so much trouble in stopping race track gambling, as there are easier and less painful ways to get rid of one's money—for example, throwing it in the river or tearing it into small bits and feeding it to the birds—but some people will never be satisfied unless they can give it to the bookmakers.

The steamship captains and their passengers are still making faces at Collector Loeb. The ways of the reformer were ever hard. People are bound to make a goat of Loeb. It has become a habit. Whatever may have been done with the tariff, theirate tourists returning from Europe want to revise Loeb downward, upward and sideways. Even the stevedores are joining the tirade. Bob Jennings, the oldest of them, who had been on a vacation somewhere and had returned to his pier with a small hand bag containing a change of shirts, was held up and made to show the contents at the gate.

"And what do you think of that?" said he. "Here I have been on the beach for over half a century and have known every customs official from Schell, Chet Arthur and the rest, and here is one of Loeb's little fellows holding me up at the gate of my own pier. Would you believe it?"

Earlier in the season New York was interested in baseball. The interest still persists in a fashion, for once a fan always a fan, but the verve and snap have gone out of our enjoyment of the game. It disappeared at about the time that our hopes for the pennant departed. We still love our Giants; but, oh, you Pittsburghers! It appears that the town on the Allegheny turns out other things besides smoke and millionaires. It also furnishes an occasional ball player. Anyway, they are grabbing the pennant away from New York. Even Chicago is ahead of us. But we can furnish pole discoverers and aviators. These are two glories that shall not be taken from us.

William Randolph Hearst has returned to life, or, rather, the remnants of his Independence league have done so. Characteristically the first words of the league after kicking off the graveclothes were to ask for an office. Strangely, however, the office demanded is not for Hearst, but for his attorney, Clarence J. Shearn. Those who remember Shearn will recall him as a young man with a small body and a large voice. Recently he has starred in the Gould divorce case. Now the cadaver of the league wants the fusionists to give him the district attorneyship. If Shearn and Jerome both run for district attorney there ought to be a splendid chance for somebody else to be elected.

At last the anti-Tammany forces are making motions as if they meant to get together. The Republican executive committee has adopted resolutions that have a fusion sound, and the committee of one hundred, through its chairman, has stated that it is willing. There are flocks of smaller organizations that are clamorously crying for the same thing, but the big fellows seem rather contemptuous of these and call them "adventurists." I think they do not include the Hearst organization among the adventurists, probably regarding it more in the light of resurrectionists. Anyway, if they will get together we will overlook the names. All we ask is a chance to vote for a straight opposition ticket without scattering our fire.

## New Records Of the Aviators



HUBERT LATHAM

THE air, that long neglected element, is assuredly coming into its own. For ages man has gazed at the birds with futile envy, but now the day seems near when even the eagle and the seagull will look to us for points on flying.

At any rate, in the year 1909 we have seen the impossible in aviation become the familiar and the slow progress of evolution in the science of flight suddenly give place to prodigies of achievement. Astounding advances have been made since Santos-Dumont, to the acclaim of continents, turned the Eiffel tower in a dirigible.

Following that remarkable feat and those of Delagrange, Von Zeppelin, the Wrights, Bleriot and others recently came the aviation contests at Rheims, France, and it was here that marvel succeeded marvel and a new epoch in human progress was demonstrated. The following records at Rheims show the wonderful progress being made by the conquerors of the air:

Aug. 22—A. Lefevre flies six and one-fifth miles in 8 minutes 58.4 seconds, breaking French speed records.  
Aug. 23—Glen H. Curtiss flies six and one-fifth miles in 8 minutes 35.3 seconds, breaking all previous records for this distance.  
Aug. 25—Bleriot smashes world's speed record by flying six and one-fifth miles in 8 minutes 4.5 seconds.  
Aug. 25—Louis Paulhan smashes world's endurance and distance records by flying eighty-one miles in 2 hours 45 minutes 24 seconds.  
Aug. 25—Latham establishes new distance record by flying ninety-five and eighty-eight hundredth miles and new monoplane duration flight record by achieving the performance in 2 hours 12 minutes 23.5 seconds.  
Aug. 27—Farman wins grand prize of Champagne, \$10,000, by smashing all previous records in flying 3 hours 14 minutes



GLENN H. CURTISS IN AEROPLANE.

26.24 seconds, covering 112.06 miles. Latham gets second prize of \$2,000, and Paulhan, De Lambert, Tissandier and Sommer get \$1,000 each.  
Aug. 28—Glenn H. Curtiss wins international trophy and championship of the world by flying twelve and two-fifths miles in 15 minutes 20.5 seconds. Curtiss

gets \$5,000 cash prize.  
Aug. 28—Bleriot establishes new speed record for six and one-fifth miles by covering distance in 7 minutes 4.5 seconds.  
Aug. 29—Curtiss wins the three lap speed contest, flying 13.63 miles in 3 minutes 42.4 seconds. Latham wins the Prix de l'Altitude, reaching a height of 155 meters (about 490 feet).

The chief event of the meeting at Rheims was, of course, the contest for the international cup of aviation, and the winning of it by Curtiss, an American, means that the international competitions of next year will be held in this country. The international cup of aviation is known otherwise as the Gordon Bennett trophy. It is an object of art valued at \$2,500, which goes to the winning club, with \$5,000 to the aviator. The course is two laps of the Betheny aerodrome, or twenty kilometers.

Curtiss' victory signifies that he is the champion aeroplane driver of the world. The speed flight is considered superior to any test that is made by a flying machine. It tests every quality possessed by an aeroplane after a fashion not possible by any other ordeal to which the apparatus can be put.

The trophy will be held by the Aero Club of America until next June, when it must arrange an international meet at which American aviators must defend the country's title to the cup against challengers of all nations. The contest will probably exceed in magnitude the one which has furnished such startling results at Rheims. All the celebrated aviators who were there will come to America.

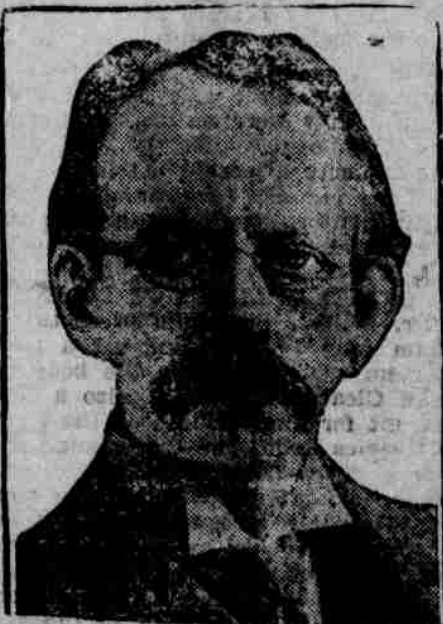
Mr. Curtiss is the head of the Curtiss-Herring company at Hammonds port, N. Y. He is scarcely over thirty years old and made his first public flight a year ago, winning the Scientific American trophy by a mile flight. He practically was ignorant concerning every law of aeronautics three years ago. His machine is the product of his own thought and study, in which he was later aided by the Aerial Experiment association, of which Dr. Alexander Graham Bell is the head.

## SUN'S HEAT FOR POWER.

Views of Sir J. J. Thomson, Now in This Country.

The meeting of the British Association For the Advancement of Science has brought to this country Sir J. J. Thomson, one of the foremost living scientists. He is very well known in America, having filled the post of Stillman lecturer at Yale, and is a member of a large number of scientific societies here. Since 1884 he has served as professor of experimental physics at Cambridge university, England, and for several years has been professor of physics of the Royal Institution, London. In 1906 he was awarded the Nobel prize for physics.

During the past year Professor Thomson has served as president of the British Association For the Advancement of Science, which recently met in Winnipeg, Canada, and in his



SIR J. J. THOMSON.

address before that body he said he had not the slightest doubt that engineers would ultimately succeed in utilizing the heat of the sun directly for power, "and when coal is exhausted and our water power inadequate it may be that this is the source from which we shall derive the energy necessary for the world's work."

Professor Thomson also reviewed some of the more recent developments of physics. The period which had elapsed since the organization last met in Canada, 1897, he said, had been one of almost unparalleled activity in many branches of physics. First in importance among its discoveries he classed the Roentgen rays. "It is not, however, to the power of probing dark places, important though this is," he continued, "that the influence of Roentgen rays on the progress of science has mainly been due. It is rather because these rays make gases, and, indeed, solids and liquids, through which they pass conductors of electricity."

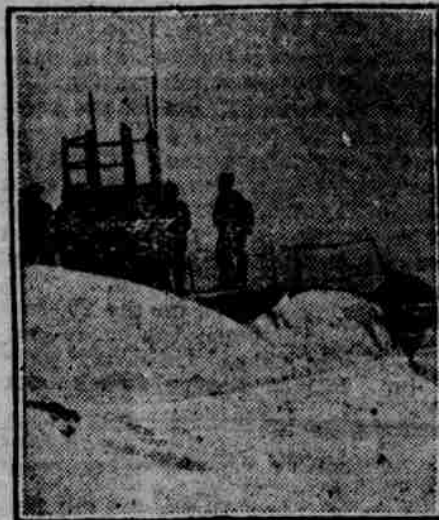
## END OF FAMOUS EDIFICE.

The World's Highest Observatory Soon to Be Demolished.

The decision to demolish Mont Blanc observatory, erected by the great astronomer Janssen, means the end of an edifice almost as famous as the mountain on which it stands. Mont Blanc rises 15,781 feet above sea level, its northeastern extremity lying within a region of perpetual snow, and as the observatory was in danger of being buried completely it was decided to demolish it and remove the valuable instruments.

Thousands of tourists have visited the famous structure and hoped to see it again, and Alpinists deeply regret the premature end of this edifice, which appeared likely to stand forever in defiance of storm and snow, for it was a welcome place of refuge after a fatiguing climb. Scientists also will miss the fine opportunity for study from this high altitude.

It was in 1893 that the structure was completed after many difficulties, overcome only by great perseverance. Un-



MONT BLANC OBSERVATORY.

der the eye of Janssen it was made in sections in Menden, near Paris, and the numerous pieces were carried some of the distance to Mont Blanc on the backs of men.

Though old and feeble, Janssen personally supervised the completion and equipment of the observatory, ascending with an energy, courage and tenacity altogether amazing considering he was a man of seventy and so lame that he could walk only with difficulty even on level ground. On three separate occasions the dauntless scientist was hauled to the summit in a sledge, and in places he was put carefully in a sling and hauled up terrific rock walls and ice gullies by means of windlasses.

Until this establishment was completed the lowest winter temperature of Mont Blanc was unknown. It was found, however, that the mercury descended to 45 degrees below zero at least. A big telescope was sent up a few seasons ago, and very valuable work was done for France, Switzerland and Italy.

## FLAG THAT PEARY NAILED.

Made in Paterson, N. J., and Presented by the D. A. R. to Pole Finder.

The silk flag "nailed to the north pole" by Commander Peary was made in Paterson, N. J., from a special weave by a local manufacturing company. It was made waterproof so that in the event of its being covered by snow and ice the colors would not run. It was on the occasion of Peary's visit to Paterson five years ago as the guest of Judge Scott that the Daughters of the American Revolution became interested in a movement to donate an American silk flag to him.

The flag is not large, but it is of the finest texture, and it was woven so that it could be rolled into a very small space. The weaving of the flag caused some curiosity in silk circles at the time, but the probable use of it was not revealed until it was completed and turned over to the Daughters of the American Revolution. It was presented to Peary on behalf of the society by the president general, Mrs. Donald McLean.

Commander Peary in thanking the daughters for the flag expressed confidence in the success of his next trip to the frozen regions and assured them that the flag would be raised over the northern extremity of the earth's axis.

## A Novel Signal.

An English street railway official has patented a signal which notifies a motorman to stop by the switching on of a light whenever a passenger steps on the footboard. As soon as the passenger alights the light is extinguished.

If he is in politics it is for pie; if he is out of politics you don't know where to put him, and he is no good for his country. If he does an act of charity it's for policy; if he won't give to charity he is a stingy old cuss and lives only for himself.